

Reports from Capitol Hill

Congressman Albert Wynn



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Improving Public Education

Through a bi-partisan effort, Congress recently passed the **No Child Left Behind Act**

linking increased funding to improving student performance. With this measure, Maryland will receive nearly \$652 million in federal education funding this year, an increase of nearly \$100 million over the previous year's funding.

Accountability in Schools

▲ The centerpiece of this legislation is increased accountability requiring schools to test students each year in grades three through eight to ensure that they are making adequate progress.

▲ Schools that fail to meet these annual progress goals, would be required to provide tutoring and after school programs. In some cases parents would also have the option of sending their child to another public school, under a program of "public school choice."

Additional Funding

▲ Increases funding for teacher training with requirement that states develop plans to ensure all teachers are "highly qualified."

▲ More than doubles funding for disadvantaged students.

▲ Triples funding for new reading initiatives to reach younger students.

Congress has already started this year's appropriations process, and Congressman Wynn is working to insure that the funding commitments made in the No Child Left Behind Act are met. In particular, he is working to insure that Congress meets its commitments to Title 1, education funding for disadvantaged students; IDEA, special education programs; and 21st Century Community Learning Centers, after-school programs.

Rep. Wynn highlights the importance of reading with students at Lamont Elementary in New Carrollton during last year's Dr. Seuss's "Read Across America Day."



Congressman Wynn
Invites You to Attend
A Town Hall Meeting

Monday, April 8, 2002

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Eastern County Regional
Services Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Road
Silver Spring, 20904

Thursday, April 11, 2002

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
James Hubert Blake
High School
300 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, 20905

Saturday, April 13, 2002

10:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.
Oxon Hill
Elementary School
7701 Livingston Road
Oxon Hill, 20745

Saturday, April 13, 2002

11:30 a.m.-12:30 a.m.
Judge Sylvania Woods
Elementary School
3000 Church Street
Glenarden, 20706

Upcoming Events 10th Annual Job Fair

Monday, May 6, 2002

Prince George's Sports
& Learning Complex

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information call:
(202) 226-JOBS (5627)

4th District Transportation Matters & Issues

METRO

When complete, the **Blue Line Extension** will be the first Metro-rail line in Prince George's County to extend past the Beltway. The project received \$55 million in federal funds for 2002. As part of Phase I, construction of the bridge crossing the Beltway between MD Route 202 and Central Avenue is underway, as well as construction of the Central Avenue detour.

Silver Spring Transit Center

The Silver Spring Transit Center would **consolidate MARC Commuter Rail, Metro, Amtrak, and local bus stations at one location**. This project has received \$12.7 million in federal funding since 1998, including \$5 million in 2002. The project has been delayed due to redesign problems. However, the new design will accommodate commercial, hotel, residential and retail space in the Center. Construction is expected to begin by July of 2003.



Rep. Wynn talks security with a baggage screener at Baltimore Washington International Airport

Route 29

Federal funding for the **construction of the new interchange at US Route 29 and Randolph Road** will help reduce congestion on one of the busiest traffic arteries in Montgomery County. Construction will continue through September on the detour for Randolph Road at Cherry Hill Road, with work on the interchange beginning after the road detour is completed.

Woodrow Wilson Bridge

Currently considered the worst bottleneck on the East Coast by the Maryland State Highway Administration, the **Woodrow Wilson Bridge must be rebuilt**. This year, federal funding for the project is \$28.6 million, in addition to the \$647 million previously allocated. The total federal contribution for the project will be \$1.5 billion. Work on the bridge's foundation will

continue through July 2003. Unfortunately, the bid for the bridge's superstructure far exceeded estimates and rebidding may cause major delays.

Homeland Security

Local First Responders

Congressman Wynn helped obtain homeland security funding in the amount of **\$7.8 million for Prince George's County and \$8.55 million for Montgomery County**. Most of the funds will be used to reimburse the counties for local first responder (fire, police and emergency personnel) costs since the September 11 attacks. The remaining funds will be used to upgrade police and fire department equipment and to provide vaccines and pharmaceutical supplies to insure the safety of first responders.

Metrorail

Congressman Wynn successfully lobbied for **\$15 million in federal funds to help fund Metrorail's Harmful Chemical Sensor Program**, which would safeguard Metro riders throughout the Washington region. Under this program, chemical and biological detection units will be installed in Metrorail stations.



Rep. Wynn joins House colleagues in fighting for money for our nation's first responders.

Port Security

Congressman Wynn co-authored a bill to **strengthen seaport security** at facilities, such as the Port of Baltimore, which generates \$1.4 billion in revenue and employs 126,700 Marylanders. The measure would provide \$1 billion in funding to purchase cargo screening equipment, upgrade communications equipment, conduct vulnerability assessments of seaports, and increase Coast Guard staff.

Pension Protection & Social Security

Pension Protection

The Enron scandal has focused attention on the national problem of pension protection. Congress is considering a number of approaches to better protect pensions including 1) whether to limit the amount of company stock employees may own; and 2) whether the same firm that manages an employee's retirement plan should be allowed to advise the employee on investment options.

As of December 31, 2000, 62% of the assets held in Enron's 401(k) retirement plan consisted of shares of Enron stock. Enron, which in January 2001 traded for more than \$80 per share, was worth less than 70 cents in January 2002. Thus, the company's bankruptcy wiped out its employees' retirement accounts.

Democrats tend to favor limiting workers' investment in their company's stock, and are opposed to letting 401(k) plan managers give workers investment advice because of potential conflicts of interest. Republicans, however, favor unlimited investment in an employee's company stock and would require advisers to merely disclose potential conflicts of interest. Enron makes a strong case for requiring independent advice, although such advice may entail additional costs for employees.

Social Security

Enron's collapse left thousands of stockholders and employees with virtually worthless investments. This sad saga also shows that even the partial privatization of Social Security may be a very bad idea. Under an even partially privatized system, millions of senior citizens could have had their financial security ravaged by this type of scandal. Sophisticated investors with stock in what was once the 7th largest corporation in the United States, were ruined. In a privatized Social Security system, less sophisticated Social Security investors would be especially vulnerable to risky stock schemes, corporate mismanagement, malfeasance, unreliable analysis and shoddy accounting. A civilized society guarantees a safety net against abject poverty for its seniors. These funds should not be treated as investment capital which anticipates a greater degree of risk, a level of risk totally unacceptable for the purposes of a national Social Security program.



Rep. Wynn unveils a community mural at the Largo-Kettering Post Office. Local artist Dan Kennedy won the competition to decide the mural's design. The artwork is the first in a series of community revitalization projects planned by Wynn for Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.